

Church of Our Savior- Leesville Historic District

9950 Harper

Local ✓ 3/9/79
State
State Marker
National



Church of Our Savior



Historic overview:

The Church of Our Savior dates its history to the mid-1860s, when a group of residents of Leesville began discussion of the formation of an Episcopal mission in their town. Leesville was a farming and crossroads community centered at the intersection of Harper (then Butler) and Gratiot. The town was named for Charles Lee, who earlier in the century, lived at what is now Belvidere and Gratiot. Since Leesville was unincorporated, it is difficult to determine what exactly the residents of that time considered as part of their little town. However, it is certain that the Church of Our Savior is the last remaining building of the town center, which included a general store, butcher shop and a sawmill.

Prior to 1874, Protestants in the Leesville area attended Lee's Chapel, but some residents were dissatisfied with the Methodism. Therefore, the Church of Our Savior was founded in 1874, with Thomas Lee among the founders. The church building was completed in 1875, and was designed by William Cooper, the eldest son of Henry Cooper, who supplied the bricks for the building. William Cooper was not a trained architect, but had worked in the building trades and trained himself to design and build.

With the coming of the automobile, Detroit experienced a population boom. The City rapidly enveloped the Gratiot-Harper area, and the character of Leesville disappeared. This growth brought parish prosperity; likewise, the changing neighborhood in later years brought difficulties. Today the church continues to function, and enjoys the support of long-time parishioners, some of whom have family ties to the Lee family and the founders of the church.

